United Nations A/50/PV.73

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

73rd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 29 November 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Abibi (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 11 *(continued)*

Report of the Security Council (A/50/2)

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I would like to express my thanks to Ambassador Al-Khussaiby, President of the Security Council, for his excellent presentation of the Council's report covering the period from 16 June 1994 to 15 June 1995. My delegation welcomes the President's personal introduction of the report as a positive development and hopes that this practice will continue in the future. My thanks also go to the Secretariat for its hard work in preparing the report.

My delegation, like others, considers this report to be an essential link between the Council and the General Assembly, in keeping with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. The keen interest shown in the report by the Member States is fully understandable in the light of the pivotal role the Security Council has been playing in recent times.

The report confirms the dramatically increased role and activities of the Council. The sheer volume of the report and the figures, set forth in Ambassador Al-Khussaiby's introduction, of the formal and informal meetings held, the various reports and communications considered, the resolutions adopted and the statements made by the President clearly demonstrate the heavy workload of the Council and illustrate the growing importance of the Security Council in world security issues.

The agenda item under discussion provides an important opportunity for interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly and between the members of the Council and the general membership. In order for these two principal organs of the United Nations effectively to discharge their shared responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security, it is indispensable that the Council's relationship with the General Assembly be strengthened.

Therefore, the General Assembly's review of the report of the Security Council should serve as an opportunity for Member States to have a meaningful exchange of views on the Council's handling of major issues relating to international peace and security in the previous year. It should provide an occasion for collective assessment of the Council's achievements as well as a moment for reflection on its shortcomings and limitations.

It is in this context that the question arises whether the current format of the report is appropriate for a body that is fulfilling a central role in the maintenance of international peace and security. An overwhelming majority of Member States, including the Republic of Korea, have called for the report to be a more analytical

95-86833 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

and substantive account of the activities undertaken by the Council rather than a simple compilation of resolutions, statements and various communications which have already been made available to them.

It should be recalled that Article 24 of the Charter, by stipulating that the Council is acting on behalf of the entire membership, entitles the general membership to be fully informed not only about the actions the Council has taken but also about the underlying motives and reasoning that have led to such actions. Unfortunately, this year's report, in following a pattern similar to that of previous years, again fails to meet the hope and expectations of the general membership in that respect.

Equally if not more disappointing is the fact that, despite the volume's bulk, the report does not include any description of the Council's informal consultations. This is particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that these days the Council relies increasingly on such informal consultations and that it is in those consultations that most of the substantive discussions are conducted.

We do not deny the importance of maintaining a certain degree of confidentiality and informality in the deliberations of the Council to encourage constructive discussions and facilitate the proceedings so that it can reach decisions promptly by consensus. However, the need for such a working style does not justify the report's complete omission of information about those consultations. Although the *Journal* provides a modest amount of information, such as the date and the topic at hand, my delegation believes that if the report also contained some basic information, including, if possible, a brief summary of the discussion, it would greatly help Member States to keep track of all the informal consultations in the previous year.

Member States have continuously called for the improvement of the working methods of the Council. The report highlights a number of procedural improvements introduced into the working methods of the Council in recent years. We are pleased to note that during the period under consideration some further improvements were put in place. Particularly noteworthy in this connection are the presidential statement of 16 December last year regarding increased recourse to open meetings and the two Notes by the President dated, respectively, 29 March and 31 May of this year concerning the work of sanctions Committees.

While welcoming these innovations as a positive step in the right direction, we believe that much more could be done. We encourage the Council, and particularly its Working Group on documentation and other procedural matters, to continue its endeavour to make further improvements and transform the Council into a more open, transparent and democratic body.

Although the issue is currently under discussion in the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, my delegation would like to indicate just a few areas of concern in which the Council and its Working Group on documentation and other procedural matters could make further improvements.

First, since their introduction in 1994, consultations with troop-contributing countries have proved extremely useful. While we are grateful to the delegations of Argentina and New Zealand for their contribution in this respect, we believe that these consultations should be further intensified and that similar consultations should be devised for the sanctions Committees to enable the countries affected or likely to be affected by the sanctions to voice their concerns in a more systematic way.

Secondly, thanks to the initiative of the United Kingdom delegation, briefings have been regularly held by the presidency since last year. But the information we get from these briefings, held once or twice a week, is often too little. Many delegations still find themselves waiting outside the consultation room to get timely information. It is for this reason that my delegation, while appreciating the existing informal briefings, still hopes that the Council will devise a more effective post-consultation briefing system to give a short account of the consultations to the non-members at the end of informal meetings.

Thirdly, it is disappointing that despite the presidential statement of 16 December 1994 the orientation debate proposed by the French delegation has rarely been utilized. We strongly urge the Security Council to make this orientation debate a regular feature of the working methods of the Security Council by convening such meetings as often as possible, in accordance with the intention expressed in the presidential statement.

Fourthly, my delegation wonders if the time has come to develop a practice of keeping a record of informal consultations and making a summary of them

available to the general membership under certain conditions.

Let me conclude by saying that the Council and the General Assembly should work together to make the Council more transparent, more accessible to the general membership and, thereby, more accountable to the General Assembly. I am convinced that an enhanced partnership between the Security Council and the General Assembly would better serve the cause of global peace and stability.

Finally, may I take this occasion to express the profound gratitude of the Republic of Korea for the overwhelming support it enjoyed in its election on 8 November to non-permanent membership in the Security Council. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea, our delegation wishes to confirm its readiness and willingness to cooperate closely with all members in their efforts to promote global peace and security.

Mr. Macedo (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mexico attaches particular importance to the report that the Security Council submits annually to the General Assembly, in accordance with its obligations under Articles 15 and 24 of our Organization's Charter. This report is the essential communication link between the Security Council and the most universal body of the United Nations with regard to the fundamental question of the maintenance of international peace and security.

We are thankful to the Permanent Representative of Oman, Ambassador Al-Khussaiby, President of the Security Council for this month, for his introduction to the General Assembly of the report covering the period from 16 June 1994 to 15 June 1995. We are pleased that this important practice, which was started by the Permanent Representative of Brazil at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, is thus being continued. We are also pleased that efforts to improve the introduction of the report are being sustained.

We should first like to refer to chapter 31 of the report, on documentation and working methods. We feel that the statement made by the President of the Security Council last December, in which the Security Council expressed its readiness to hold more frequent open meetings, especially during the initial phase of consideration of an item, should be applied more often. We share the view, expressed last November by the Permanent Representative of France, that in the work of the Security Council greater and greater importance should be attached to public debate and that a balance should be sought between formal and closed meetings. Undoubtedly, that was the intention of the authors of the Charter. The Security Council must not become a body whose decisions, which affect all of us, are adopted behind closed doors, in almost clandestine deliberations.

However, we find that in the period covered by the report, the Security Council held 274 closed meetings — 22 more than in the corresponding period of 1993 and 1994. We hope that this unfortunate trend will be corrected and that the Security Council will hold more frequent public debates.

Our desire for greater transparency is not motivated by inquisitiveness; it is directly linked to the need for the rest of the States Members of the Organization to make a constructive contribution to the work of the body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Mexico has no doubt that greater support from all those who make up the United Nations for the decisions of the Security Council would strengthen the capacity, legitimacy, efficiency and effectiveness of that body.

We deem very positive, as an example of the contribution the other Members of the United Nations make to the work in the Security Council, through public debate, was the consideration of the Secretary-General's "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace", referred to in chapter 10 of the report. We are convinced that the open meetings held on that occasion, in which many countries non-members of the Security Council took part, were very useful in clarifying the international community's perception of that very important document. The meetings also provided orientation for the statement made by the President of the Security Council at the end of the exercise and sent a very healthy message of openness. We feel that this working method should be strengthened.

We appreciate the measures adopted by the Security Council to rationalize its agenda and enhance transparency in the sanctions Committees. We welcome the fact that the introduction of the report under consideration contains more information on the work carried out in those Committees, since their mandates affect economic interests that are in some cases very sensitive. We hope that the report that each Committee must submit annually to the Security Council can be distributed in timely fashion so that Member States will have more information on the activities of those subsidiary bodies of the Security Council.

We know that the side-effects of the sanction regimes are a reason for concern. The debate on this issue has been held not only in the Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace, but also in the Sixth Committee. We hope that the work of the Working Group on Article 50 of the Charter will be strengthened. We also feel it necessary in the closed meetings of the sanctions Committees, to strengthen the practice of listening to the comments of interested States and organizations regarding questions that arise in connection with the implementation of the measures adopted. We consider that improved communication in this area can only lead to an improvement in the activities of the Committees and greater support for the overall work of the Security Council.

We are convinced that it is time for the mechanism of special reports provided for in the Charter to be used. For example, it would be very useful, in the case of operations that have been concluded, for the Security Council to submit a special report to the General Assembly. We have in mind the cases of Somalia and Mozambique, in which there was an important need for a precise assessment from the Security Council on the achievements reached and the problems faced in the course of the endeavours carried out on behalf of all of us, the United Nations.

In addition, we feel that the submission of quarterly reports would help strengthen communication between the Security Council and the General Assembly. We wish to point out again that we think a special rapporteur of the Security Council, entrusted with the task of informing the Member States, would further enrich cooperation.

Another area of particular importance that calls for strengthening is the mechanism of consultations between the Security Council and the troop-contributing States. We must not forget that those who provide personnel and material to peace-keeping operations have a very legitimate interest in participating in decisions that could put the lives of their young soldiers at risk. Resolutions of this type directly affect those who are working and making sacrifices for the cause of peace.

Last year we welcomed the initiative on this point submitted by Argentina and New Zealand. We feel that the time has now come to formalize this mechanism and to give it an institutional character. This would contribute to transparency, to the openness we all desire.

The Security Council does not have autonomous authority. The Members of the Organization have entrusted it with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It acts on behalf of all of us, not simply on behalf of its own members — hence the Council's responsibilities to the General Assembly. We sincerely hope that the steps taken by the Security Council in terms of public meetings, sanctions committees and consultations with the troop-contributing countries will be consolidated and expanded.

We hope that there will be new and better channels of communication between the Council and the General Assembly and between the Member States and the Security Council. The maintenance of international peace and security is, after all, a common goal of all the Members of this Organization.

Mr. Mustasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The United Nations Charter, and specifically Article 24 thereof, stipulates that the Members of the United Nations agree that the Security Council, in carrying out its duties, acts on their behalf. Thus the Council is responsible and accountable to the Membership of the Organization and should take into consideration their directives in implementation of the principle that there is no conferment of powers without accountability. It is on this basis that my delegation participates in the debate on this item. Our aim in so doing is to review the work of the Security Council, to evaluate its activities and to ascertain whether or not it has responded to our requests, and heeded our suggestions, indeed whether or not its methods of work and procedures have been inspired by our advice.

However, before I do that, allow me to express on behalf of my country's delegation our profound appreciation to Ambassador Al-Khussaiby, the Permanent Representative of Oman, who, in his capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November 1995, has introduced the Council's report to this session of the General Assembly.

The report of the Security Council, contained in document A/50/2 comes at a time when the Council has embarked on taking measures aimed at ensuring more transparency in its work. The publishing of its daily and monthly agendas has become an established practice and the periodic briefings by the President of the Council have provided Member States with more information on the Council's meetings and consultations. My delegation welcomes these improvements in the Council's methods of work. However, we must emphasize, at the same time, that the measures adopted so far do not respond to

the basic points that have been raised, namely, that the comments that have been made on the Council's annual report and its methods of work have not been sufficiently taken into consideration.

The Security Council's report now before us contains, in its introduction, brief accounts of the work of the sanctions committees. This is a positive development. But the remainder of the report has remained as it was before: a mere statistical narrative of a whole year of the Council's work. To describe the report in these terms is not to belittle its importance. The report may be useful academically, but as a basis for evaluating the work of the Security Council, it is still lacking in many respects. The report presents the Council's resolutions and statements in abstract terms, without any background information on the different phases they passed through before being adopted or on the reasons that justified their adoption.

It appears that the Council has not taken into consideration the much repeated appeals for the holding of more formal meetings and for limiting informal consultations to the absolute minimum. It is indeed cause for concern that the Council has done the exact opposite. Its record shows that it has held 152 formal meetings in which it adopted 70 resolutions and issued 82 presidential statements whose texts appear in the report. While the report mentions that the Council also held 274 consultation meetings, the document now under consideration does not contain any information on what actually took place in those consultations: it only mentions that, in total, they lasted for 420 hours. The only explanation for this is that the Security Council does not pay sufficient heed to our opinions and proposals in this respect, or that it considers that what took place in those consultations was so secret that it should not be divulged to the Members of the United Nations on whose behalf the Security Council is supposed to act.

My country's delegation welcomes the fact that the Security Council has begun to consult with countries that contribute troops to the United Nations peace-keeping operations. Yet, we cannot but express our concern over the fact that the Council is still hesitant about putting into practice the procedure provided for in the Charter which calls for the Council to consult with other countries, especially those that are parties to a dispute under consideration by the Security Council. Furthermore, the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council remains limited to the presentation by the Council of its annual report to the General Assembly. This by itself does not meet all the requirements of the Charter and, specifically, the contents of paragraph 1 of Article 15 which stipulates that beside the annual report, the Council shall submit to the General Assembly special reports on questions that threaten international peace and security. Had the Security Council provided the General Assembly with such reports, it might have been able, in cooperation with this Assembly, to devise the means of resolving many of the crises and violent situations that have been witnessed by many parts of the world.

The past few years have witnessed actions by the Security Council which could be described as very unusual. The Council has acted in a manner that fully contravenes the Charter when it authorized one of its members to act on its behalf in extremely grave matters, such as military intervention. At the same time, the Council did not act properly to avert the immense tragedy that unfolded in Rwanda. In certain cases, the Council has applied double standards. While, it did not act as it should have when the Israelis shot down the Libyan civilian aircraft in 1973, and adopted the same position when the Americans downed the Iranian civilian aircraft in 1988, it has dealt in a completely different manner with the incident of the American Pan Am flight which crashed in 1988. It is regrettable that, in dealing with that incident, the Council did not afford the opportunity for the question to be dealt with in accordance with the Convention that deals with such matters — namely, the 1971 Montreal Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation.

This has clearly shown that the purpose of raising the issue was not to get to the truth, but to punish. If this was not the case, why were all other solutions provided for under Chapter VI of the Charter excluded? Is the mere suspicion that two Libyan nationals were involved in the incident a sufficient justification for dealing with it under Chapter VII of the Charter, which is not applicable to it in the first place, since the problem is a legal one that should have been dealt with by specialized bodies such as the International Court of Justice?

The fact that we raise this question now does not mean that we are trying to make use of the occasion of the discussion of the present item, as some may think. We are doing this in order to prove to the Council that in dealing with certain cases, it did not act in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. The case to which I have just referred adds another dimension: namely, that the Council, in dealing with a number of cases, acts according to the wishes of certain countries and not on the basis of the authorization given to it by the Charter.

It is well known that the League of Arab States has put forward a proposal for solving what has become known now as the Lockerbie problem. This proposal calls for the trial of the two Libyan suspects before a Scottish court by Scottish judges, at the seat of the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Libya has accepted this proposal and many of the families of the victims of the incident have accepted it. It has been supported also by regional international organizations such as the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement, whose representatives have clearly confirmed this support to the Security Council.

The Security Council does not act on behalf of States Members of the United Nations. If it were really acting on their behalf, the views of the members of the organizations I have mentioned, who account for over two thirds of the members of this Assembly, should have been taken into consideration. But the painful fact is that the Council has fallen under the control of one of its permanent members. If this is not the case, why then does the Council not accept the Arab proposal, which provides the best solution for this longstanding problem? And why does it yield to the wishes of a powerful Member State that does not want a solution to be found for the problem? All that Member State wants is to keep the Libyan people suffering under the sanctions for the longest time possible, under the pretext that Libya refuses to allow the two suspects to appear before a court of law. This is utterly false. Libya has not refused the trial, but, as I have explained, the two suspects and their Western lawyers have rejected the idea of their appearing before British or American courts because they will not receive a fair trial, since they have already been convicted by the mass media and even by officials at the highest levels in those two countries.

This regrettable situation makes it necessary to carry out a comprehensive review of the Security Council's methods of work and procedures with a view to improving them and ensuring their increased transparency. There is also a need to seek the necessary means whereby this important body may be made immune to any attempt at dominating it or using it to achieve objectives that serve special interests. In our view, the following proposals are extremely important:

First, the annual report of the Security Council should be improved further. Future reports should include the background of the resolutions and statements adopted by the Council. It should include also a summary of the discussions that take place during the informal consultations held by the Council, and should include also more transparent and more comprehensive reports on the work of the subsidiary committees established by the Security Council and in particular the sanctions committees.

Secondly, the Security Council should revert to the sound practice that used to guide its work so that it may afford all Member States the opportunity of expressing their views on items under discussion and of contributing to the decision-making process in the Council. This would correct the current situation, wherein those Member States find themselves faced by matters that have been decided beforehand, in many cases, as a result of initiatives taken by a number of its permanent members.

Thirdly, the Council should expand its consultations with States that are non-members of the Council and in particular those States that are concerned with questions under consideration by the Council. The Council must also strengthen its relationship with the General Assembly and thus make it possible for the General Assembly to ensure the Council's accountability in order to guarantee the democratization of its resolutions, the avoidance of double standards in its work and the consonance of its activities with the stipulations of the Charter. This requirement acquires special importance from the fact that a number of permanent members of the Council tend to foist upon it questions that are far removed from the areas of competence mandated to it by the Charter.

Fourthly, the working methods of the Council's sanctions committees should be reconsidered in order to allow the States concerned to attend the meetings of those committees and to voice their views on the matters under consideration. It is highly important that the guidelines of these committees be reviewed in order to allow for the application of democratic principles to their decision-making process. No restrictions should be imposed on the manner in which the fate of the requests submitted to those committees is decided, as is the case now, since every single committee member has a right of veto that can be used against any request considered by the Committee.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the Security Council will not take lightly the great interest shown in its report and the proposals that have been put forward with a view to improving its working methods and those of its subsidiary committees. We expect the Council to take serious action to guarantee transparency and democracy in its work, and that it will submit its future reports in a manner that would be consistent with the

provisions of the Charter and that would respond to the demands of all Member States, on whose behalf the Council acts.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): This year, once again, Canada wishes to take advantage of the General Assembly's examination of the Security Council's report in order to make some observations on the work done by the Council since our debate on this subject on 31 October 1994.

I should like to thank the Permanent Representative of Oman, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, for having introduced the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

The beginning of 1995 was marked, on the one hand, by the withdrawal of the United Nations from Somalia and, on the other hand, by the launching of two major operations — in Haiti and Angola. In spite of the difficulties encountered by the United Nations in Somalia, in Rwanda and in Bosnia, which have led to some disillusionment with peace-keeping, the States Members of our Organization have demonstrated the firmness of their commitment to the United Nations by generously contributing forces to these two operations. The Security Council, for its part, has established more clearly than in the past the conditions governing the operations. Further, the United Nations has engaged in detailed planning, which in the case of Haiti brought about an effective transition from the multinational coalition to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH).

(*spoke in English*)

There is no doubt that, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace" (A/50/60), the Security Council finds itself in a period of transition, conscious of the limitations on its actions. To these limitations are now added the financial crisis of the Organization, the effect of which is felt primarily in its peace-keeping operations. Peace-keeping arrears were US$ 2 billion as of 15 November. The situation led the Secretary-General to suspend reimbursements to troop-contributing countries last June and also to give instructions to the heads of peace-keeping operations to explore ways to effect immediate savings, including possible troop reductions. Moreover, in his letter of 18 September to the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General stated that, in his opinion, the aggravation of the financial crisis made it simply unrealistic to envisage the enlargement of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to perform the tasks required.

This crisis is serious. Peace-keeping is a complex undertaking that presents challenges which are quite serious enough for the United Nations without the additional grave problem of inadequate financing. In these circumstances, we can only repeat once again the call to all Member States to make their peace-keeping contributions on time, in full, and without conditions. It is critically important that the Organization be in a position to resume reimbursements to troop-contributing nations as soon as possible.

Canada and other Member States have presented to the General Assembly proposals aimed at improving the rapid reaction capability of the United Nations. Many of these proposals contain a number of practical recommendations. We attach particular importance to the establishment of a standing, deployable headquarters, which, in combination with a strengthening of the standby arrangements system, would permit the rapid deployment on the ground of a vanguard force. If these recommendations were put into effect, they could give the United Nations a more efficient instrument for dealing with crises that demand an immediate response from the international community.

Often, peace agreements between parties place a premium on the timely deployment of a United Nations mission. Even in the more predictable cases, such deployments have in the past suffered frequently from unacceptable delays. We look forward to the support of the Security Council members in the implementation of these recommendations, and hope that they will work with those Member States interested in improving the United Nations rapid reaction capability.

The Security Council must continue to improve the instruments at its disposal in order to carry out its difficult task of maintaining international peace and security. It could take decisions that are more fully and carefully considered, and develop mission objectives and mandates to which members of the Council are fully committed. To do so, however, the Council must have a realistic assessment of the situation on the ground from the political as much as from the military point of view; the Council needs to have more precise information about the resources it will have at its disposal, and it must be confident that the parties are ready to offer sufficient cooperation to assure the success of the operation.

The Council can count, as in the past, on the cooperation of Canada in this crucial endeavour.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): Let me begin by associating my delegation with the statement made by the President of the Security Council for this month, Ambassador Salim Al-Khussaiby of Oman, in introducing the annual report (A/50/2) of the Council for the period from 16 June 1994 to 15 June 1995.

The recent practice whereby the Council's President introduces the report to the General Assembly serves a number of purposes. First, it strengthens the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Secondly, the General Assembly has an opportunity to further inform itself about the activities of the Security Council and the future direction of its work. Thirdly, it also underscores the importance of accountability. The Security Council acts on behalf of the entire membership of the United Nations, and therefore the Council should report on its activities to the General Assembly as a deliberative body and thereby ensure the support of the General Assembly for its activities and for the decisions taken on Members' behalf.

Since the establishment by the Security Council in June 1993 of an informal Working Group on documentation and other procedural matters, a series of steps has been taken by its members to provide for enhanced transparency, enhanced interaction and enhanced consultation between Council members and non-members. Some of the latest steps include regular briefings by the presidency of the Council for non-members, which has now become an established practice. There is also briefing for Chairmen of regional groups. Furthermore, there is an agreement among Council members to have increased recourse to open meetings — in particular, at an early stage of their consideration of an agenda item.

Another important decision that was taken in November of last year, following an initiative of Argentina and New Zealand, was the establishment of a more effective and institutionalized system of consultations between Security Council members and troop-contributing countries. Although there is room for improvement, this development has been particularly welcomed, given the increasing complexities and demands of United Nations peace-keeping operations. As a major troop-contributing country, Nigeria takes the view that consultations between troop-contributors, on the one hand, and the Security Council, on the other, are not only desirable, but necessary for the full discharge of our Charter obligations.

My delegation thanks the Secretariat for the efforts that went into the preparation of the present report. We are aware that a lot of time and many resources have gone into its production. None the less, the report basically remains a compilation of the various communications received by the Council and the decisions adopted by it during the reporting period. We believe that the report should in the future provide an analysis of the activities of the Security Council, analysis of the decisions that have been taken, and how far those decisions have evolved over time, particularly at the implementation phase. It would be very useful, in our opinion, to know whether a particular decision has helped to move the process towards resolution of the problem concerned and perhaps what lessons, if any, could be learned. While we realize that this will involve a lot of time, a lot of work and enormous resources, it is the only way to have a user-friendly and reader-friendly report on the Council's activities.

The workload of the Security Council in the discharge of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security continues to be heavy. It has increased not only in volume, but in scope. As the report indicates, during the period under consideration the Council held 152 formal meetings and adopted 70 resolutions and 82 presidential statements. In addition, the Council members held 274 consultations of the whole, totalling some 420 hours. This represents an increase in the figure for the preceding 12-month period. No doubt, this scope of work reflects the changed circumstances of the post-cold-war environment. This change in circumstances has enabled our Organization to begin to play the role and fulfil the expectations envisaged for it at its founding.

This new political environment has, unfortunately, witnessed an increase in conflicts, many of which are intra-State but with serious implications for regional as well as international peace and security. Peace-keeping has become the critical concern of our time. The majority of the peace-keeping operations currently being undertaken by the United Nations are located in third world countries, many of them in my own continent, Africa. The underlying causes of these conflicts are social and economic, and they further underscore the intrinsic linkages between peace and development and the need for a renewed global commitment to both.

In this regard, my delegation believes that conflicts in any part of the world should be addressed on a basis of equality, and that the impression should not be created

by certain members of the Security Council that conflicts in some parts of the world are more important than conflicts in others. After all, international peace and stability are indivisible — and that, in our opinion, is the very essence of collective security.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate its belief that the Council is in urgent need of revitalization and structural reform, not only in its working methods and procedures, but also in its composition and size. The Security Council can maintain and enhance its credibility, its legitimacy and its effectiveness and respond adequately to existing realities and the daunting challenges it faces only through an increase in its membership in both of the two categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. We therefore call for renewed commitment of the part of the General Assembly in addressing this question.

Mr. Reyn (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): As it does every year, the General Assembly is considering the report of the Security Council. The report before us today covers the Council's activities from June 1994 to June 1995. This voluminous report attests to the intensity of the activities of the Security Council and will prove useful for tracking the way in which items before the Council have been handled. In this connection, our thanks go to the Secretary-General.

The General Assembly's consideration of the report gives me the opportunity to speak of the question of transparency in the activities of the Council, and I shall limit myself to that subject. To my mind, this transparency has certainly improved in recent years. I can only praise the efforts to improve access by States not members of the Security Council to the Council's work. The advance publication of the Council's provisional agenda and its monthly programme of work, the regular oral reports by the President of the Council, the possibility of open debate, and proposals for improving the transparency of the work of the various sanctions committees are all measures that can only be a source of satisfaction.

With respect to sanctions, we consider that there could be further efforts to achieve transparency. For example, last week the Security Council adopted a resolution establishing a regime for the suspension of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. But since then we have had no information on the implementation of the suspension regime. This is but one example of the progress yet to be achieved in this area.

Among measures for transparency, we want to reiterate the special importance we attach to consultations with troop-contributing countries. Because they provide contingents, thus making it possible to implement Security Council decisions, troop contributors have a legitimate right to have their voices heard during the decision-making process. We feel that this would also be in the interests of the effectiveness of Security Council decisions. The process of consultation can only strengthen the commitment of contributors in the implementation of the mandates adopted by the Security Council. Moreover, the experience of contributors can help the Council in formulating mandates and adapting them to developments in the situations for which they are established. While emphasizing the need to continue and improve consultation with troop contributors, we remain fully aware that the final political decisions lie with the Council. Without wishing to challenge its sphere of competence, we feel none the less that it is important for all to have the opportunity to share their concerns. They do so now, but the process could still perhaps be improved.

Measures to improve transparency in the work of the Council are positive developments, and we welcome them. These measures must be continued and improved, and, if possible, must achieve a proper degree of formalization. In this connection we are convinced that realism and experience are our best guides. We see something of a risk in seeking to institutionalize these measures before they have had time to develop to maturity. It is more important for us to retain a tool that could be ruined by excessive formalism.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): In recent years, Member States have focused on improving the work of the principal organs of the United Nations with a view to strengthening the authority of the United Nations in the world, and enhancing its role and influence in shaping the processes that orient the main trends in international politics and multilateral diplomacy.

Looking at the work of the Security Council during the year under review, we find that the Council has been busy indeed with events connected with crisis situations. All of this is clear from the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. It is obvious that, increasingly, the tasks before the United Nations are qualitatively new and involve conflicts between States, which have grown in number in recent years. The growing number of conflicts and their regional origins indicates the deep roots of the political problems faced in

the regions in question and reflect the depth of the crises shaping events in many such regions.

In this connection, we note that while some measures have been successful, old approaches to the settlement of conflicts have proven ineffective. Unfortunately, this is gradually becoming true also of the delivery of humanitarian assistance, which is one of the important ways in which the international community has traditionally reacted to migrations and crises. Many feel that the United Nations in its present form is inadequately prepared to carry out military operations; Member States do not often hold a positive view of peace-keeping operations.

It is time to rethink the Security Council's approach to such situations, to review the nature and methods of its participation in conflict resolution, to prepare well-founded criteria by which to analyze conflict situations, and to consider ways for the Council to harmonize its action with that of the General Assembly, the body most fully reflecting the balance of interests of all States. We cannot ignore the fact that many States view the Security Council's frequent wish to act independently as a serious danger, in the light of the Council's power to impose sanctions and take the decision to use force.

That is the explanation for the many proposals by which the Security Council would conduct more public, formal meetings in place of closed-door meetings, would provide timely information to States not members of the Council on decisions under preparation and would provide Member States with copies of its draft resolutions before the Council meets to consider them.

There are undoubted advantages to the practice of distributing Council material freely to all Member States at the stage when issues are being prepared for consideration, not after the fact, at some later time, when the decision has already been taken and when the world uses it to judge the effectiveness of the work of the Organization as a whole -- and thus to judge the positions of States that are not on the Council and therefore have taken no part in the drafting and adoption of its decisions.

The unanimous emphasis placed by all those who spoke during the Special Commemorative Meeting marking the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations on the need to increase the transparency of the work of the Security Council as a whole requires that the Security Council take the next logical step in reforming its working methods. Above all, reform must allow increased access by all States to the full range of information available on the activities of the Organization and the Security Council. Belarus is not a member of the Council and only once, in 1974-1975, had a chance to participate in its work. Therefore, public opinion in my country judges the effectiveness of the United Nations first and foremost on the basis of the Organization's major activities, including decisions of the Security Council and, of course, on the basis of information brought to the attention of Member States. It is quite clear that to avoid any distortions, and to be fully reliable, such information should be first-hand, not passed on by word of mouth or interpretation, no matter how detailed and brilliant those interpretations might be.

Therefore the question of the timeliness and accessibility of all information used to prepare the corresponding decisions of the Security Council is far from minor for us. This is a political, not a technical issue. The possibility of participating in the drafting of recommendations that are considered by the Security Council is significant for us in terms of strengthening emphasis on the establishment of an international security system that would reflect the national interests of our State against the backdrop of the voluntary renunciation of its nuclear weapons capability and, consequently, the fulfilment of its international obligations on disarmament.

Unfortunately, the Council's report still does not enable us to judge the complexity of the situations it deals with and the correctness of the decisions it takes. Furthermore, there have been a number of instances where not even all the members of the Council have seen the documents that are used as the basis for subsequent action decided on by the Security Council, including the use of military force. In our opinion, the report lacks the necessary analytical character and, as in the past, is no more than a straightforward statement of what has been done and what is already common knowledge. In the future, we hope to have a firmer basis for a positive assessment.

Allow me to touch upon one more problem, namely the question of the imposition of sanctions. Because the sanctions regime, in practical terms, upsets the normal and balanced functioning of the economy of whole adjoining regions, undermining their entire economic infrastructure and rupturing external economic links, we need a mechanism for the careful consideration, before any decision is taken on imposing sanctions against any country, of the potential consequences of such a step both for the country targeted by the sanctions and for third countries.

We share the view that sanctions should always be imposed with a specific goal in mind. Then, from the very outset, ways and criteria for lifting the sanctions regime should be provided for and the terms of application of the regime regularly reviewed.

These are the views of our delegation on this item.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Charter stipulates that the Security Council is required to present annual as well as special reports to the General Assembly on its activities so that such reports may reflect the nature of the relationship between the two bodies, a relationship the Charter wanted to be institutionalized and cohesive. The report under consideration indicates that the Council's interest has been focused primarily on the former Yugoslavia and Africa. With regard to the former Yugoslavia, the Council's report dealt with the many questions that reflected changes in the United Nations role in the maintenance of peace and in emergency humanitarian situations, in addition to questions relating to the use of United Nations peace-keeping forces in protecting humanitarian relief supplies. The report also highlights the Security Council's support for the efforts aimed at achieving a political settlement through negotiation and the use of mandatory sanctions as a means of achieving that goal. Despite the criticism levelled at the Council regarding the way in which it has dealt with the problem of the former Yugoslavia, criticism which we expected the Council's report to analyse and answer, there has been no mention in the report of this matter.

With regard to Africa, we commend the institution by the Council of six peace-keeping operations in the continent, four of which are still operative. The Mozambique operation has carried out its mandate successfully and the United Nations forces in Somalia have been withdrawn after accomplishing their humanitarian task, if not their political one. While the four operations in Angola, Rwanda, Western Sahara and Liberia continue to discharge their mandates, the General Assembly has not received any reports on the progress made in that respect. The Council has attached particular importance to sending missions to Burundi, Western Sahara, Somalia and Mozambique as part of the continuing efforts to resolve the disputes in those countries through fruitful and constructive cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Naturally, the Council's focusing on the events in the Balkans and in Africa is not of the Council's choosing but stems from the fact that it has been these two regions which have witnessed the largest number of the disputes that have emerged or continued during the period covered by the report.

Article 15 of the Charter stipulates that the Council shall submit comprehensive periodic reports to the General Assembly. Such reports are important in view of the increase in the Council's work, in the number of its meetings and of the varied nature of problems it deals with as well as the different ways in which it deals with those problems. Hence the need to review the style and content of the reports submitted by the Security Council to the General Assembly.

As the delegation of Egypt has already stated, the idea behind the report is not to simply advise the General Assembly of the dates of the Council's meetings, of the resolutions it adopts, or of the documents on which it bases its resolutions because such information is readily available to the Member States on time. What is really needed is for the General Assembly to acquaint itself with the view the Council takes of the developments of the disputes it deals with and of the extent of the threat those disputes pose to international peace and security. More importantly, the report should contain the Security Council's analysis of such development and its suggestions as to how the disputes or situations should be dealt with, including the contribution the Council thinks the General Assembly could make towards the promotion of the United Nations efforts in dealing with such questions.

The report before us today presents a statistical narrative of the Council's activities from 16 June 1994 through 15 June 1995. It does not contain any substantive information on the reasons that underlay the adoption of any of its important resolutions, on the activities of its subsidiary bodies and committees or on its relations with the General Assembly in regard to such issues. In this respect, it is worth noting three major considerations which have to do with the constitutional and organizational aspects as well as the political developments that define the general framework of the institutional relationship between the Assembly and the Council in the area of maintaining international peace and security:

The first consideration relates to the constitutional nature of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. The relationship arises from the fact that the Charter, the constitutional document that governs the interrelationships of the Organization's bodies, conjointly charges the General Assembly and the

Security Council with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The Council has a primary responsibility, but not an exclusive responsibility. Suffice to refer in this respect to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice when it considered a case of certain expenses of the United Nations in 1962. In that opinion, the Court, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, underscored the definition of the above-mentioned nature of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council by stating that the General Assembly has a residual responsibility towards the maintenance of international peace and security.

The second consideration has to do with the organizational aspects. The Charter has conferred on the General Assembly, as the organ in which all Member States participate, far-reaching spheres of competence, particularly in Articles 11, 12 and 14, and thus made the General Assembly, in actual fact, the supreme organ of the Organization that receives reports from all the other main organs, holds those organs accountable to it and issues guidelines to them.

The third consideration relates to political developments. We must bear in mind that the General Assembly demonstrated, in 1956, its effectiveness in developing further the manner in which the United Nations addresses questions of international peace and security. At the time, there was a serious gap that resulted from failure by the Security Council to apply the provisions of Chapter VII in situations which involved threats to international peace and security. This, of course, was at the time of the cold war. Indeed, the period from 1946 through 1956 was characterized by the Security Council's failure to achieve the conclusion of the special agreement or agreements provided for in Article 43 of the Charter and thus did not have at its disposal the military contingents of Member States envisioned by the Charter for deployment whenever international peace was threatened. At the time, the Council contented itself with sending cease-fire observers.

Consequently, when the Korean War broke out in June 1950, the only option the Council had was to entrust one of its members with the task of implementing its resolutions. However, this arrangement was far from satisfactory. Therefore, it was found necessary to give thought to the adoption of more acceptable effective and stable arrangements within the framework of the Charter. It was then that the United States put forward its well-known proposal that was adopted per General Assembly resolution of 3 November 1950, under the name of "Uniting for peace".

Over the years, this resolution was the target of severe criticism that, on the one hand, questioned its legality and, on the other belittled it and doubted its effectiveness. All such criticism, however, evaporated into thin air when three States Members of the United Nations attacked Egypt in October 1956. At the time, the Council failed to rise to the responsibility mandated to it by the Charter *vis-à-vis* this tripartite aggression. Consequently, the question was referred to the General Assembly in line with the "Uniting for peace" resolution. On the initiative of the late Lester Pearson, Foreign Minister of Canada and then United Nations Secretary-General the late Dag Hammarskjöld, the First United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was created. It was in fact the first peace-keeping force ever created by a General Assembly resolution. The situation has now evolved to the point where the peace-keeping forces have become the central pillar for preserving peace in today's world. We must always recall that it was the General Assembly, and not the Security Council, that created the concept of peace-keeping.

The President took the Chair.

The achievement of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter requires a greater deal of cooperation with the necessary controls and the transparency needed for the establishment of a salubrious and legitimate relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. To that end, we wish to reiterate and underscore the importance of some of the proposals the delegation of Egypt has put forward in this respect, which I summarize as follows:

First, the Security Council reports should be submitted to the General Assembly every three months. The reports should analyse and evaluate all the issues before the Council and should state the Council's view on the future development of the situations involved.

Secondly, the General Assembly should be afforded the opportunity to respond to the Security Council's reports by conveying to the Council its own views on the issues before the Council, given the General Assembly's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Thirdly, the Council should provide, in the manner it deems appropriate, all the necessary information on its informal consultations regarding the various issues before it and on the trends that emerge in the course of those consultations.

Fourthly, the Council should issue periodic reports on all ongoing peace-keeping operations, their goals, and the objectives achieved. The reports should state also the difficulties that face such peace-keeping operations in carrying out their mandates and should contain the Council's recommendations on what the General Assembly could do to promote the performance of the tasks mandated in such operations. The Council, on the other hand, should receive from the General Assembly reports on its views and efforts in this regard.

Fifthly, there should be consideration of the possibility of creating joint mechanisms of the two organs to address similar situations in accordance with pre-determined rules and controls.

Finally, I wish to highlight the importance Egypt attaches to ensuring joint constructive action by the General Assembly and the Security Council for the achievement of the purposes and principles of the Organization. It is the importance we attach to this matter that makes us ask for a review of the modalities of the mutual cooperation by these two bodies with the aim of ensuring the utmost efficiency in the Organization's discharge of its tasks, especially those relating to the safety and security of the international community as a whole. We hope that, in the years to come, the General Assembly will receive reports that would reflect this concept. We are convinced that the Assembly's response to such reports will serve the interests of world peace.

Mr. Hamdoon (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Security Council submits its report to the General Assembly under article 15 of the United Nations Charter. The logical basis of this is the stipulation in Article 24 that the States Members of the Organization mandate the Council to act on their behalf. Proceeding from this, the submission by the Council of its report to the General Assembly is the measure that affords the General Assembly the opportunity of studying the Council's activities and of gauging the extent of the Council's adherence to the mandate given to it by the Member States.

Unfortunately, this practice has been stripped of its real content through submission by the Council of an annual report that is narrative in character and that does not include any substantive information that would make it possible to seriously and objectively evaluate its work. As a result, the Council is deprived of the opportunity of securing the support of the General Assembly, and the General Assembly is deprived of the opportunity of scrutinizing and evaluating the work of one of the most important organs of the Organization.

Notwithstanding the additions introduced, the Council's report now before us in document A/50/2, has not come as an exception to the above rule. It lists the titles of the subjects it discussed and the resolutions and presidential statements it adopted or issued on those matters. It does not, however, disclose the reasoning that led to the adoption of those resolutions or the issuance of those statements, nor does it include anything about the Council's informal closed consultations which account for the greater number of its meetings. Neither does it disclose the sources of the information upon which the Council relied in assessing the situations involved and in adopting the relevant resolutions. The report makes no reference to the priorities set by the Council, to the justification of such prioritization or to any evaluation by the Council of the developments that took place during the year with regard to any of the issues dealt with. Likewise, the report does not cover any of the matters that have a bearing on the essence of the Council's work and spheres of competence.

The absence of such content from the Council's report prevents the General Assembly from ascertaining whether or not the Council has adhered to the spheres of competence mandated to it by the Member States. It also prevents the General Assembly from identifying the Council's successes and failures. Moreover, the non-existence of accountability has led, especially over the past five years, to the Council's unilateral adoption of extremely serious resolutions that have been far removed from the letter and spirit of the Charter. All this has made it possible for the Council to encroach on the responsibilities mandated by the Charter to the General Assembly, specifically in Articles 10, 11 and 14, with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. It has also made it possible for the Council to impinge the very prerogative of States to deal with their own internal affairs. This has impacted adversely, not only on the credibility of the Security Council but also on the credibility of the United Nations as a whole. Therefore, the situation should be set right and the Security Council should be required to submit a comprehensive and substantive report to the General Assembly, as one of several measures that would ensure oversight by the Member States over the Council's work.

As pointed out, there have been certain additions to this year's Security Council report. Among those additions there are the statements issued by the Council

on the improvements to its methods of work. However, such statements have not been translated into reality by the actual measures on the ground. Let me give here one example of this. The Council's presidential statement of 22 February 1995, referred to in Chapter X of the report, states that:

> "The Security Council ... agrees that the object of economic sanctions is not to punish but to modify the behaviour of the country or party which represents a threat to international peace and security. The steps demanded of that country or party should be clearly defined in Council resolutions, and the sanctions regime in question should be subject to periodic review and it should be lifted when the objectives of the appropriate provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions are achieved. The Council remains concerned that, within this framework, appropriate measures are taken to ensure that humanitarian supplies reach affected populations". *(S/PRST/1995/9, p. 4)*

If we ask whether the Council has adopted any measure to translate into reality the contents of its above statement in the case of a State under sanctions such as Iraq, the answer will be no. This statement of intent has changed nothing: the reality of the situation is that the sanctions imposed on Iraq have been continued as a means of collectively punishing an entire people, and the steps required from Iraq to end the sanctions have remained as vague as they have always been in the Council's resolutions, as in paragraph 21 of resolution 687 (1991), for instance. The Council's statement, furthermore, has not made the periodic reviews of the sanctions regime result in any change for the better. To the contrary, the change has been, consistently, Rather, the situation goes from bad to worse. Nor has the statement resulted in the taking of measures by the Council to ensure that humanitarian supplies reach the affected Iraqi population. What really happened was that there has been haggling with Iraq over its territorial integrity, with the aim of emptying the "oil for food" slogan of its humanitarian content and then the Security Council adopted resolution 986 (1991) with the aim of shrugging off the responsibility of exposing an entire people to death by blockade.

In addition to the foregoing, the Security Council's report failed to report on the activities of its subsidiary bodies whose activities are of great importance to Member States, especially the sanctions Committees, which deal with questions that affect the very livelihood of many peoples. The report refers only to improvements in the methods of work of those subsidiary organs mentioned in the Council's presidential statement of 29 March 1995. While we welcome those improvements, we find that much more important improvements are still required. Among those much needed improvements are the following:

First, there is a need for a precise and unambiguous legal interpretation of the Council's resolutions which determine the spheres of competence and terms of reference of boycott and sanctions Committees. This is needed to avoid the extremist and politically oriented interpretations made by some committee members.

Secondly, the formula for the adoption of resolutions by Committees must be changed. The current consensus method, which, in practice, gives every member the right of veto, must be abandoned in favour of the application of a two-thirds majority. This would prevent members from using obstructionist tactics for political purposes.

Thirdly, the countries subject to sanctions should be allowed to attend Committee meetings as observers and, when they so request, such countries should be allowed to participate in the Committee's deliberations in order for them to clarify their applications.

Fourthly, there is a need to ensure more transparency in the activities of the committees by making it easier for Member States to familiarize themselves with the verbatim records of those committees' meetings. This would be useful, *inter alia*, in curbing the excessive rejections by some committee members of the supply of humanitarian assistance materials to the country under sanction as, for instance, in the case of Iraq, some committee members reject the supply of pencils, children's bicycles, school books, copybooks, hospital beds, and many other items, under flimsy pretexts.

Fifthly, there is a need to keep the boycott and sanctions committees apprised of the various studies and statistics on the humanitarian situation of civilians in the country under sanctions. The committees should consult with the relevant United Nations specialized agencies concerning the effects of the sanctions on each country, and should, on the force of such consultation, make recommendations to the Security Council.

It is our hope that the Council will take note of our comments and of the comments made here by other

delegations and that next year we shall discuss a rich, comprehensive and substantive Security Council report.

Mr. Guerra (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is with great pleasure that I speak today on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. First of all, I should like to congratulate Ambassador Salim Bin Mohammed Al-Khussaiby, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman, on the outstanding work he has done as President of the Security Council for November.

The report on the work of the Security Council contains a compendium of the decisions and measures adopted by the Council as well as the communications and other documents of the Council. Unfortunately, the report continues to be a description and a collection of information and does not contain an adequate analysis of matters before the Council. The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly should, in our view, be based on an open and ongoing dialogue. Efforts should be made to implement General Assembly resolution 48/264.

Although the number of formal meetings and the hours dedicated to consultations have increased since last year, and although there have been instances of participation of non-members of the Security Council in these meetings, much broader participation by countries that are not members of the Council is still necessary before the formal adoption of decisions. The Council's official, public meetings should not be used merely to formalize decisions that have already been reached behind closed doors.

Nevertheless, we welcome with satisfaction the informal information meetings convened by the presidency on the current work of the Council. We hope that such meetings will be a regular and frequent feature and that it will not be left to the monthly President to decide to hold them. In such meetings, non-member delegations have access to the oral reports of high-level Secretariat officials that are not reflected in the present report.

As we had an opportunity to point out in a previous statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, on agenda item 47, the Heads of State or Government of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement, who met at Cartagena last October, made a detailed analysis of the functioning of the United Nations and in particular of the Security Council in the current international situation.

Allow me to state once again the criteria that the Non-Aligned Movement at its highest level has formulated on this issue:

> "The Heads of State or Government welcome the ongoing endeavours aimed at reforming and improving certain structures and procedures of the United Nations as an essential component of strengthening multilateralism with a view to ensuring equal participation, more balanced representation and better equilibrium, in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In this context they stress the need to democratize the United Nations in order better to reflect the Organization's universality and fulfil the principle of the sovereign equality of States. They emphasize, in particular, the need for full democracy and transparency in the work of the Security Council, in view of its recent practices and performance. They express their determination to participate constructively in the process of revitalization and reform in the firm conviction that the United Nations is an indispensable forum, to be supported and strengthened. Yet the democratization of international politics and the economic institutions inherent in such a process continues to be hampered by those who seek to preserve their privileged position of power. In these endeavours, the main purpose should be to make the Organization more responsive to the changing realities and emerging challenges of peace and development in a dynamic context.
>
> "In view of the increasing trend on the part of some countries to exercise undue influence over the Security Council and the privileged and dominant role that the veto right ensures for the permanent members of the Council, which is contrary to the aim of democratizing the United Nations, the Heads of State or Government reiterate their position adopted at the Fifth, Sixth and Tenth Summits regarding the special privilege of the permanent members of the Security Council to exercise that right and commit themselves to actively promoting its curtailment with a view to its elimination. Furthermore, while welcoming the actions taken by the Council with regard to its transparency and working methods, they regard them as still insufficient and urge the General Assembly to recommend to the Council further measures to ensure its full democratization.

"They stress the importance of enhancing the effective functioning of the Security Council by the adoption of specific and effective measures aimed at improving the working relationship of the Council with the General Assembly, with other organs of the United Nations and with non-members of the Security Council. They also underscore the need to put Article 50 of the Charter into operation, particularly by institutionalizing the relevant provisions of that Article, as well as to adopt other effective measures to enable non-members to bring to the Council's attention their problems and difficulties with a view to their solution.

"While recognizing the importance acquired by informal closed meetings of the members of the Council, they reaffirmed their conviction that those informal consultations must not replace the provisions enshrined in the Charter and the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, nor restrict the necessary transparency in its work."

We would like to welcome the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that were recently elected to the Security Council and whose term will begin on 1 January 1996: Chile, Egypt and Guinea-Bissau. We are convinced that they will strive to bring success to the work of the Organization.

We also wish to thank the members of the Non-Aligned Movement that are completing their term in the Security Council — Nigeria, Rwanda and the Sultanate of Oman — for their endeavours in the Security Council during the last two years.

We hope that the report submitted next year will reflect substantial changes in terms of increased transparency of the work of the Council and greater democratization in its decision-making.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): The report of the Security Council to the General Assembly should be of interest to the public for two reasons: on the one hand, we are interested in what the Council did; on the other hand, we are interested in how its work is captured in the report.

What the Security Council actually does is a matter closely followed by most delegations from one day to the next. For the observant non-member of the Council, there should be no surprises here. On this issue, the Council met so many times, on such and such dates; on that issue, so many times, on such and such dates. The Council passed this or that resolution, agreed on this or that presidential statement.

All of this information is amply presented in the draft report, sometimes in stultifying detail. This is the case, despite the fact that in the introduction we are informed of a 20-year-old decision of the Council to simplify its reporting. If what we get now is the simplified version of the Council's report, then I wonder what the non-simplified version would look like, in this era when the Council's work has immensely expanded compared with what it was 20 years ago.

Two of the reference books on the desk in my office are the Security Council report and the collection of Security Council resolutions published on a calendar-year basis by the Department of Public Information. Whatever the difference between them, there is definitely a lot of overlap. They both, for example, contain integral texts of all Security Council resolutions and presidential statements. Is this really necessary? Would it not be possible for the editors of the two volumes to have a talk in order to reduce this obvious duplication? Would it not be possible for the Security Council, in 1996, to introduce a different paragraph in the introduction and, instead of mentioning an editorial decision made 20 years ago, say something like,

"The texts of all Security Council resolutions have been published in such-and-such document" — perhaps of the Department of Public Information — "and are incorporated in this report by way of reference"?

That would certainly decrease the heft of the report at hand.

This might seem like a proposal of minor import, but adopting it would enable us to focus on the rest of the report's content. It would allow us to think of the report in the way one thinks of the annual report of a corporation or, perhaps more appropriately, of a not-for-profit organization. What we look for in such annual reports is not a listing of every single sale made or of every single contribution received, but for a synthetic look at the organization's last period, in terms of revenues, balance sheet grants — this kind of stuff. We look for an analytical look as well. Are there trends worth noting? How do last year's results compare with those of the previous year or of the previous five years?

We find precious little of this in the present report. And yet it should not be so difficult to provide, even if we were to stick to purely quantitative indicators, such as the number of documents — resolutions and presidential statements — adopted over a period of several years on major issues of concern. Take the former Yugoslavia, for example. How has our preoccupation with this part of the world, even if viewed purely quantitatively, evolved since 1991? What sort of a curve would a graphic representation of these numbers represent? What, in comparison, would the spike of Rwanda look like, especially in the period covered by the report under discussion, or the curve of African issues in general?

My delegation would find such an approach useful, certainly as a start. It might be more difficult to embark on a qualitative analysis: what the Security Council report might tell us about such things as the general state of international peace and security. We recognize the tremendous efforts of the Secretariat in collating the report, in keeping tabs on every aspect of the Security Council's work and, indeed, in producing, in the last analysis, the report we are discussing.

Attempting a qualitative analysis, however, would be beyond what one could seriously expect from the Secretariat, because analysis is a matter of interpretation, interpretation is a political exercise, and the scrupulously neutral and non-partisan Secretariat staff is bound to eschew this — correctly so, even if we feel that what they end up producing is of greater utility to historians as source material than to diplomats as a source of insight into the Council's workings.

But the Council itself has all the power it could possibly need to shape the form of the report. The fact that something has always been done in a particular way is not a good enough argument for keeping things that way, and, in fact, it is frequently a sufficient argument to do them differently. But it is the Council which must decide to change this. If, then, there is one thought that my delegation would like to bequeath to the Council members of 1996, it is this one: have the Council's Working Group on documentation and procedure start thinking from the very beginning of the year about the shape and content of future reports to the General Assembly.

One can, nevertheless, draw suggets of analysis even from the raw data presented by the Secretariat, especially if one has previous volumes at hand. Consider some of the statistics mentioned in the introduction: they imply that in the period covered, the Security Council adopted 20 per cent fewer resolutions than in the previous year — 70 compared with 87. This is probably a good sign. However, the Council met almost 10 per cent more often in informal consultations and spent almost 20 per cent more time actually consulting.

What does this tell us? Has the Council become more talkative, if it needs 20 per cent more time to discuss 20 per cent fewer resolutions? Has it perhaps become more argumentative? Has it become more thorough? Has the quality of resolutions improved?

Whatever the interpretation — and, admittedly, the facts I have presented are biased because I ignored the increase in the number of presidential statements — these statistics do indicate one thing: the importance of informal consultations, even if measured merely by the amount of time Security Council members spend in them, continues to increase. This is a trend that started a few years ago, certainly with the end of the cold war. A graph in the report showing the number of hours spent in informal consultations over the past few years would be very helpful here. And this is a phenomenon which, according to United Nations old-timers, hardly existed — certainly not in its current metastasized form, before a separate Consultation Room was constructed for informal consultations in the mid-1970s.

Furthermore, it is a phenomenon that the founding fathers had not counted on. To my knowledge, they did not include "consultations of the whole" in the Charter. They did not assume that the bulk of the Council's deliberative work would take place in such a forum. And they certainly did not anticipate that the bulk of the Council's deliberative work would be so totally screened from "the world beyond", so totally insulated even from other Members of the United Nations, including Members whose business is actually under discussion.

And so from a discussion of the Security Council report to the General Assembly one comes to discussing some of the Council's methods. A lot has been said from this rostrum about transparency and about measures the Council has adopted in the period under review to open up a bit, so to speak. Let us make the best possible use of these openings. Let us be active in troop-contributor meetings. Let us attend the regular briefings of the Council presidency and let us be more probing in our questions. But, still, after our two-year experience on the Council my delegation has come to the conclusion that fundamental additional steps have to be taken along these lines. Most especially, we suggest that a fundamental

reinterpretation of Article 31 of the Charter is needed. And we intend to propose certain initiatives along these lines in the near future, in the appropriate working group.

Mr. Rider (New Zealand): New Zealand is pleased to have the opportunity to participate once again in the debate on the report of the Security Council.

The report before us covers the period from June 1994 to June 1995. For the first six months of that period New Zealand was a member of the Security Council, and a participant in its consultations and decision-making processes. For the second six months we shared the perspective of most Members of this Organization: as observers of the Council as it went about its multi-faceted business.

As the report in document A/50/2 makes clear — and the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic gave us some very good examples a few moments ago — the year under consideration saw little, if any, diminution in the workload of the Council. Items continue to be added to an already-overcrowded agenda. Few are ever removed. In the interests of effectiveness more should be. The same is true of peace-keeping operations. They cannot and should not become permanent features of the landscape. The notion that peace-keeping forces can be maintained for 20 or 30 years is, in the view of my delegation, stretching the resources and the credibility of the United Nations too far.

In some areas respite does appear likely. It seems that the United Nations role in peace-keeping in Bosnia will soon be wound up. The tragedy of Bosnia preoccupied the Council during the whole of New Zealand's two-year term. The Agreement reached in Dayton will hopefully soon begin to bear tangible fruit. We all look forward to that day. We earnestly hope that it will mean that Bosnia has finally entered a truly peaceful phase.

The respite that is gained should, in our view, be used profitably by the Council to reflect on how it has been conducting its business, and how it might conduct it better in the future. It is on this subject that I want to focus today.

New Zealand has been going through its own process of structural reform. It has been painful. It has involved significant reform of the economy and the public sector. But it has proved worthwhile. Our people, our country, our economy and our Government are better placed than they once were not only to compete in the market-place but also to play a positive role as a valuable member of the international community.

Our reform processes continue. But we have reached the stage where we can look back and reflect on how we proceeded and how we might have done better. Reform efforts can really pay off only in a climate of transparency and inclusiveness. That is the message New Zealand will continue to bring to all the United Nations reform efforts. In the various working groups we will consistently be arguing for openness, inclusiveness and transparency. Equally, we believe this is a relevant message for the Security Council to hear, as it reflects on its working methods and procedures.

One area where there is room for improvement is the ability of non-Council members to have an input into Council affairs of interest to them. The idea of orientation meetings, proposed by the delegation of France, was an excellent one. New Zealand was the first Council member to support France's initiative. The purpose of the idea was to allow States not members of the Council to express their views publicly in advance of the Council's beginning private consultations on the actions it might take in response to particular situations. All too often the only chance for public debate is after the Council has come to its decision — hence the appearance of formal Council sessions as rubber-stamping exercises.

But, like so many good ideas, the practice has fallen short of the principle. Orientation meetings have not become the accepted part of Council practice that was promised in the presidential statement in document S/PRST/1994/81. This was not for lack of interest and support from non-members. Perhaps it was just pressure of business. If so, I want to stress the value of such meetings — and not just to non-members, but to the Council itself. What may be forced upon us as short-term expediency is not in anyone's longer-term interests. The Council should live up to its promises in this matter.

Another area where expectations have not been met is that of consultations between the Council and troop contributors. In September last year, when New Zealand was a member of the Council, we, together with Argentina, proposed substantial improvements in the consultative process; they are detailed in document S/1994/1063. Subsequently, on 4 November 1994, the President of the Council issued a statement in document S/PRST/1994/62 setting out the agreed arrangements for improved consultation. That statement also reflected the

Council's willingness to keep the arrangements under review, and to consider further measures to enhance them in the light of experience.

Some of the meetings held under the new arrangements have demonstrated the need for, and the value of, better consultation. Some of the Council members are to be commended for trying to make the new arrangements work. But for the most part Council members, like the Secretariat, treat the meetings as briefing sessions for non-members. They see no need to speak. Some do not attend. The process is consultative only in name.

Nor does the process match the expectations raised by the 4 November 1994 presidential statement, which foreshadowed an expected scheduling of consultative meetings at the beginning of each month. The *pro forma* references that appear in the Council's tentative programme of work are not sufficient. Background papers indicating the topics to be covered are supposed to be circulated well in advance of each meeting. This does not happen. Most meetings take place at short notice, are unstructured and have no discernible outcome.

Under these circumstances, it is hardly likely that the reports the Council President is required to make to the Council on these consultations can be very informative or assist the Council in its deliberations.

In the light of this experience, therefore, New Zealand considers it timely for the Council to live up to its undertaking to reopen this matter and pursue enhanced arrangements in open dialogue with troop contributors. An appropriate vehicle for such a dialogue, in our view, would be a formal Council meeting, open to all, specifically to examine the issue of consultations between the Council and troop-contributing countries. Better still, the Council could, in addition, establish an informal joint working group involving its members and the troop contributors for initial discussions of the issue.

We note, on the basis of statements made both here in plenary and in the debate on peace-keeping operations in the Fourth Committee, that such a serious review would be widely welcomed. It would demonstrate the Council's awareness of its responsibilities towards Member States. It would also show that the Council can take the lead in the search for improved effectiveness and efficiency. Such a lead could be a critical contribution from Security Council members as we all deliberate on wider United Nations reform in this anniversary year.

Mr. Zawels (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like expressly to thank the Secretariat for preparing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. We would like also to thank the President of the Security Council for having introduced the 1994-1995 report and for having followed the tradition that was begun two years ago.

A few short days ago my delegation took part in the adoption of this report at a formal meeting of the Security Council. Today, we wish to take the opportunity afforded by the General Assembly's consideration of the report to share some thoughts on the day-to-day work of maintaining international peace and security and on the circumstances facing the international community in that respect.

The period covered by this report has seen challenging and important events that without a doubt have affected, and will continue to affect, the way in which the international community meets the difficulties of security. We need only recall some of the milestones along the way: the situation in Rwanda and the emergence of genocide; the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) from Somalia; the return of democracy to Haiti; the culmination of the peace process in Mozambique; the resumption of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia; the new impetus in the peace process in Angola; a new approach to the application of economic sanctions against Iraq; and so on.

All these events, as well as the experience of the past few years, have led the Security Council to engage in a process of reflection — without, however, slowing down its work — on its methods of work as well as on the very essence of the role of the international community in the maintenance of peace.

In this process, particular emphasis should be placed on the catalysing effect of the report entitled "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace", which was submitted at the beginning of this year by the Secretary-General. Useful comments are made therein on the maintenance of peace, sanctions, disarmament, the use of force and post-conflict peace-building. In the report the Secretary-General also takes up one of the most serious institutional issues facing our Organization: the financial crisis.

I should like briefly to touch upon some of these issues in order to express the views of the Republic of Argentina on some aspects of these difficult questions.

First, this past year saw various significant developments in the area of peace-keeping operations: the deployment of two new major operations, in Haiti and Angola; the deployment of a Mission of Observers in Tajikistan; the redefinition of mandates and restructuring of forces in the former Yugoslavia; the successful conclusion of the mandate in Mozambique; and the withdrawal from Somalia.

All this took place amidst a grave financial crisis and growing scepticism in some sectors of international public opinion about the capabilities of peace-keeping operations. These two issues have not yet been squarely faced, but they must be faced if we are to preserve the option of continuing the maintenance of peace where conditions are right.

Peace-keeping operations have a 47-year history, marked by more successes than failures and by heroic sacrifices. They have proved to be a useful tool for the international community. However, today the challenge is to know when to use them and how to adapt them to the characteristics of our times.

Secondly, with respect to the use of force, the period covered by the report saw two operations in which the Security Council authorized an international coalition to use force — in Rwanda and in Haiti.

It seems increasingly necessary to draw a distinction between the maintenance of peace and the use of force. These are two distinct modalities or instruments that may or may not be complementary.

In order to strengthen the legitimacy of the use of force, these operations must be consistent with the will of the international community, within the parameters of international law.

In this regard, the Security Council has an important role, not only in authorizing these operations but also in framing them within certain limits and within an overall context for solving disputes. The case of the operation authorized for Haiti is an example of how the use of force can be included as one stage of a broader comprehensive strategy of the international community.

In some cases, regional organizations or arrangements can play an important role in the implementation of the use of force. We are seeing this today in the implementation of the Peace Agreement between the parties in the former Yugoslavia. Within this framework we should also mention the cases of Liberia, Tajikistan and Georgia.

Despite our experience in recent years it can be said that the international community is still in the early stages of resorting to an instrument involving the use of force for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council must be able to incorporate its past experience in its future activities in a positive manner.

Thirdly, economic sanctions have become an effective instrument for the international community. In this particular period there were seven different sanctions regimes. The sanctions, as we have said, have proved to be useful, although it should be recalled that this is a remedy that not only attacks the illness being fought, but also produces considerable side effects, both on the civilian population of the State under sanctions and on third States, particularly neighbouring States.

Hence, caution should be exercised in the establishment, continuation and renewal of sanctions. In recent months, the Council has taken on various activities within this framework. In the case of Iraq, the Council adopted resolution 986 (1995), which allows that country to sell oil to purchase humanitarian goods. Argentina actively participated in the drafting of that resolution, which we hope to see implemented. The suspension of sanctions against Yugoslavia has also proved to be an effective means for getting that country to cooperate actively in the attainment of the international community's objectives. The resolutions that the Security Council has just adopted in the same context are proof of the effect sanctions can have if used with determination, order, resources, clear objectives and flexibility and within the framework of an overall strategy.

Fourthly, with regard to its methods of work for the period covered, the Security Council has taken important steps in reforming those methods of work and procedures. The following initiatives in particular should be pointed out.

The establishment of a mechanism for consultation between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, originally proposed by New Zealand and Argentina, is an important and necessary step by the Council. It is clear that such a mechanism must be improved, in particular in terms of its effect on the practice and the nature of these meetings, which for the time being are merely informal. My delegation feels

it is time to work towards a formal mechanism, perhaps similar to the one provided for in Article 44 of the Charter.

Another important initiative was for the greater use of formal meetings — this was a proposal which was made by the delegation of France and actively supported by my delegation; indeed, my delegation implemented it during our presidency of the Council when we discussed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "A Supplement to An Agenda for Peace". Since then there have not been any other orientation discussions where the views of Member States that are not members of the Security Council are heard before decisions are taken. It is to be hoped that this procedure will become the norm. That depends exclusively on the Security Council, in particular, on the monthly Presidents.

Most of the Security Council's work takes place in informal consultations. Informing non-members on what takes place in those consultations is essential if we wish to preserve in the long term the legitimacy of the Council's work. The Security Council agreed in its Working Group on procedures and documentation to inform non-member countries regularly. During its presidency Argentina provided substantive and timely information to non-member States daily. Since then, only a few presidencies have followed that example. It is to be hoped that the Council will duly understand the importance of providing regularly complete information on relevant aspects of the Council's work in its informal consultations in order to ensure greater transparency.

The informal consultations of the Security Council are the venue where the Security Council spends most of its time and where important decisions are adopted, and also where all of the decisions of the Council are discussed and negotiated. In my delegation's opinion, we should define more precisely the legal nature of these consultations. We should also study the possibility of applying certain important principles contained in the Charter, such as the principle in Article 31, which enables the parties involved in a conflict to participate in discussions that affect their interests, and in particular when the other party is, as has happened, a member of the Security Council.

All these aspects refer to principles that have great importance for the delegation of Argentina. They are the Council's transparency, accountability and representative character *vis-à-vis* the Members of the United Nations.

We hope that the changes that have already taken place will be broadened and that they will contribute to the greater legitimacy and, hence, to the greater efficiency of the Council's work.

The non-permanent members, which were elected by the General Assembly, have a particular responsibility in this task since they must provide the impetus and overcome the inertia — sometimes understandable — of the permanent members on many of these issues.

The delegation of Argentina wished to contribute to this debate these particular comments on the present and future work of the Security Council. These are based on our recent experience as a member of that body. We feel it is important for the Members of the United Nations to have an opportunity to debate these issues in detail. We know that there is much room for reflection and a great margin for change if we wish to see a more effective, more representative, more democratic and more transparent Security Council. All these elements have to do with its legitimacy, and therefore contribute to the important, indeed the primary, task entrusted to the Council by the Charter, that of preserving and maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba)(*interpretation from Spanish*): The practice of presenting the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, reinstituted appropriately by the Permanent Mission of Brazil in 1993, has become increasingly important, not only for the work of the Council, but also for all the Members of the Organization, which are increasingly concerned in that body's activities and decisions.

This practice, enshrined in Article 15 of the Charter, enables the General Assembly to be informed so as to be able to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter on issues of fundamental importance to the international community, such as international peace and security.

However, the delegation of Cuba considers that the report contained in document A/50/2, which is before us today, will make it difficult for the General Assembly to shoulder and fulfil these responsibilities.

We wish to express our support for the comments made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The report before us bears the clear signs of a brief summary and will make it difficult for the States Members of the Organization to assess the activities that

the Security Council has undertaken on their behalf and to determine whether or not that organ has made the proper use of the powers delegated to it by those very Members. At a time of reform, restructuring and revitalization, the work of the Security Council should not be presented in a partial, summary fashion. We consider that the necessary transparency in the work of that body demands an analytical, critical and complete account.

The Security Council continues to retain the right to determine when a situation is or is not a threat to international peace and security. The majority of States Members of the Organization learn of this after that right has been exercised, without consultation, and after a decision has been irrevocably adopted.

The Security Council continues to decide when it is necessary to invoke Chapter VII of the Charter. The majority of Member States learn of this when a new sanctions regime is about to go into force. Moreover, the sovereign right of States to express their views on the implementation of such sanctions, on their impact on third States and on compensation for the negative effects of sanctions on third States that have been affected by their implementation is often impeded.

Other situations or actions, such as the proliferation of peace-keeping operations and the granting of "licences" to States or groups of States to act on the Security Council's behalf, should be added to the list of things that the report should address in depth. Substantive consideration should also be given to the increasingly frequent metamorphosis of traditional status-of-forces agreements, originally agreed upon with the concurrence of the parties to a conflict but later modified.

Document A/50/2 includes not a single word about the real debates within the Council on crucial matters of international peace and security. The inadequate practice of weekly briefings by the President of the Council, while praiseworthy in spirit, is nothing more than a failed attempt, and often amounts to nothing more than reading out press releases that are circulated among the thousands of United Nations documents, or to references to "periodic meetings with troop-contributing countries", whose results are not made known to all Member States. Rarely are these meetings the scene of substantive debate on the situation on the ground, which is the real concern of the international community at large.

We also consider that reports of the Council should not only include references to the official documents considered or adopted by the Council but should also reflect the results of so-called informal consultations of the whole, which inappropriate practice has turned into the true debates of the Security Council. The report of the Security Council should contain the substance of the frequent oral reports made to the Council by high-level Secretariat officials and should include important documents that are not always published, such as letters from the Secretary-General and reports of the Council's subsidiary bodies.

In our opinion, the basic point is the unbalanced composition and the unsuitable procedures of the Security Council. In our view, the lack of substantive reports and the flawed machinery for providing information on Council activities are simply a reflection of the reality. We will only find true solutions, as opposed to the mere palliatives we have seen to date, by engaging in an in-depth discussion of the question of the democratization, restructuring and reform of the Security Council.

Only when the United Nations has a representative, democratic and transparent Security Council that maintains the proper relationship with the General Assembly and that makes correct use of the powers entrusted to it by Member States will we have a truly effective Security Council; only then will the United Nations be able to meet the demands and challenges of the future.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): The annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is submitted as an obligation under Article 15 (1) and Article 24 (3) of the Charter. Under these Articles the Security Council is obliged to account for any actions or measures it may have taken on behalf of the general membership of the United Nations in the discharge of the responsibility conferred on it by the Charter in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security. Clearly, the founding fathers of the United Nations wished to establish a channel of communication that would ensure that the General Assembly would be fully informed of the work of the Security Council. In other words, the Security Council was not given *carte blanche* to operate without reference or reporting to the General Assembly.

The report before the General Assembly today is the fiftieth in the series of reports that the Security Council has obligingly submitted to this body. Whether or not they have been useful reports is a totally different matter. The strength of feeling among the general membership of the United Nations that the Security Council has over the

years become a secretive and exclusive club of a few privileged States persists with mighty force. It can no longer be ignored. The improvements in the working methods and general operations of the Security Council to which the President of the Council referred in his statement yesterday are an attempt to respond to these concerns.

But are the improvements to which the President of the Council and I have referred enough? I believe the answer to this question must be a resounding "no". Presidential briefings to non-members of the Security Council, while an improvement in the flow of information, do not seem to have attracted a lot of attention. During Botswana's presidency of the Council in February, we had briefings every afternoon. The Assembly has also been told by the representative of Argentina that under his presidency there were daily briefings. Unfortunately, attendance at these briefings was generally not encouraging, to say the least.

With a few exceptions, those attending came from delegations concerned with a particular regional subject on the Council's agenda, and most of those who came frequently were from the delegations of States whose non-permanent membership in the Security Council had just come to an end. However, we feel that the consultative machinery can still be pushed a step further. The possibility of more frequent and regular presidential briefings, not only to the Chairmen of the regional groups, but to the regional groups themselves when a subject is of interest to Member States therefrom, could also be explored.

The number of formal meetings of the Security Council has decreased drastically over the years. We must concede that the decreased number of formal meetings has meant a consequential reduction in the number of delegations attending or participating in the few formal meetings of the Council. Most formal meetings of the Council have, in reality, become gatherings for explanations of vote by members of the Council. They are not the setting for general debates in which non-members of the Council could be afforded an opportunity to participate actively in the work of the Council and make their own contribution. It is no wonder, therefore, that attendance at formal meetings of the Council has also declined over this same period.

There is a general feeling that the meetings of the Council have become mere formalities following agreements reached behind closed doors, a feeling which is shared by the non-permanent members of the Council, including yours truly. Meetings of troop contributors are, on the other hand, well attended at all times, a welcome development indeed in the effort to make the Council more transparent. It is time the openness and transparency displayed in the meetings of the troop contributors permeated all the functions and operations of the Security Council and made it increasingly the democratic organ of the United Nations that it should have been in the first place.

My delegation attaches great importance to the work of the Security Council Working Group on documentation and other procedural matters. My delegation found it most useful during its presidency in pushing through Council business which would have taken much longer to complete if the whole Council had tackled it. The only disappointment here is the insufficiency of the interpretation facilities put at the disposal of the Council. A lot could otherwise have been accomplished through the Working Group.

In conclusion, we are here to listen to the views of the General Assembly, to hear what the general thinking is regarding the work of the Security Council, and we would welcome any condemnation that the Assembly may want to unleash against the Council, because it is your Council. I have no doubt that we shall benefit immensely from this debate.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): I wish to begin by congratulating the Permanent Representative of Oman, Ambassador Salim Al-Khussaiby on his eloquent, effective and clear introduction to the General Assembly, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, of the Council's report on its activities. My compliments go also to the Secretariat for a job well done.

The report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is always an important reference point for the discussion of questions regarding the maintenance of international peace and security, as established in Article 11 of our Charter. The report is a descriptive document and is very useful for its comprehensiveness and its relevance to particular situations and points discussed in the Council. In the future, we should perhaps try to include, along with the report's many annexes, an account of the Council's almost daily consultations on crisis areas, regional tensions, humanitarian emergencies and other issues crucial to local and global stability.

Furthermore, in our opinion, the Security Council can and should work in even closer and more effective coordination with the General Assembly. Only if there is full and constant transparency between the Council, its members and the general membership of the United Nations can we progress. In addition to the great efforts to reform the United Nations system and thus enable the Organization to meet the growing challenges of the future, the practice of transparency — by which I mean a daily striving for real contributions to be made to the Council's decision-making process by all countries concerned — is a feasible and practicable course.

With regard to the provision of information to and consultation of countries contributing troops to peace-keeping operations, we are greatly indebted to Ambassador Keating of New Zealand and Ambassador Cardenas of Argentina for pioneering the idea that such consultation, rather than the mere provision of information — and we all know that there is a sharp difference between the two — should always be held before and not after the Council begins its deliberations on items affecting troop-contributing countries. In fact, during the month of our presidency, last September, Italy strove to follow and, wherever possible, reinforce this practice. In this regard, I would also like to recall the initiative taken by the French delegation to hold orientation meetings as a means of fostering greater interaction between the Council and the general membership.

When Italy held the presidency of the Security Council, we made it a point to hold daily briefings for all members of the General Assembly. This was done for the sake of transparency, because there can be no participation without transparency, and the participation of all concerned in the decision-making process is an absolute prerequisite in a world where there is a growing affirmation of the principles of democracy and respect for individual and collective rights.

The Security Council's great amount of work, as evidenced by the report to the General Assembly, demonstrates the ongoing vitality of this crucial organ of the United Nations. My country, Italy, is convinced that the Security Council's role is and will continue to be of fundamental importance in guaranteeing peace and security throughout the world and above all, that it will be a more democratic and transparent Council than ever.

Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe): My delegation is honoured to be the last speaker; perhaps this is more than coincidence, since we are the last in the alphabetical order.

My delegation associates itself with the remarks which were made by the Permanent Representative of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on this agenda item, "Report of the Security Council".

My delegation recognizes the efforts the Security Council has made so far to ensure the timely submission of its report to the General Assembly, contained in document A/50/2. We also appreciate the introductory remarks made by the Permanent Representative of Oman in his capacity as the current President of the Security Council.

When the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/264 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, it underscored the importance of the Council's accountability to the general membership on whose behalf it acts. At a time when the Security Council is shouldering ever-increasing responsibilities, it is vital for that principal organ of the United Nations to keep the general membership of the United Nations informed of its activities and functions in a manner that will enhance its credibility and moral authority.

It is disappointing to note that the report before this body is no different from the previous reports which the Council has submitted. We are therefore disturbed at what we consider to be an unacceptable erosion of the important requirement of the Charter for the report before us. We believe that the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly has been reduced to a sterile compendium of letters and documents that came before the Council in the preceding year and an opaque listing of decisions that it took without indicating in any way what really transpired. This cannot be considered to be accountability.

Three weeks ago, when this Assembly considered agenda item 47, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", my delegation pointed out that it was imperative for the Council to introduce new measures and practices in order to improve its working methods and procedures and enhance its relationship with the general membership. We stated that it was necessary to establish

> "a formal mechanism for collaboration between the Security Council and the General Assembly" *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 59th meeting, p. 11)*

with authority and not mere advisory status being vested in the General Assembly.

In our view, the current report to the General Assembly and the Council's occasional rounds of news bulletins and briefings fall far short of any meaningful involvement of the general membership in the decision-making process. In that regard, the representative of Mexico and the Permanent Representatives of Botswana and Italy have made specific proposals, which my delegation supports, for improving the working methods of the Security Council.

Would not the free flow of information between the Council and the General Assembly foster greater transparency and accountability to the international community, on whose behalf the Security Council purports to act? Are Member States not entitled not only to know about, but also to be involved in, the open debates of the Council on issues that might affect them, such as sanctions, peace enforcement, peace implementation, and even the aborting of operations like that in Somalia?

My delegation looks forward to a further consideration of this item and other items when the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters resumes its work in the new year.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/50/2?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 11?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.